

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 /026 W

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R 161341Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0315

INFO USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

USINT CAIRO

AMEMBASSY SANAA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L TRIPOLI 0936

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PFOR LY EG TS AG

SUBJECT: MORE ON THE MYSTERY OF QADHAFI

SUMMARY: QADHAFI APPARENTLY IS IN BENGHAZI, ACCORDING TO TUNISIAN AMBASSADOR HERE. HE FAVORS THEORY THAT QADHAFI WILL ANNOUNCE FAILURE OF HIS IDEA OF COMPLETE EGYPTIAN/LIBYAN UNITY AND CALL FOR ITS IMPLEMENTATION LATER, AND BELIEVES IN ANY CASE THAT QADHAFI HAS LOST FACE BOTH EXTERNALLY AND INTERNALLY. MEANWHILE, FEZZANI IS VERY PLEASED WITH PROGRESS IN TUNISIAN/LIBYAN ECONOMIC COOPERATION, AND CONFIRMS THAT ALGERIANS ARE NOT DOING QUITE SO WELL HERE GENERALLY. END SUMMARY.

1. JULY 16 CHARGE CALLED ON TUNISIAN AMBASSADOR AMOR FEZZANI TO EXCHANGE INFO AND VIEWS ON LOCAL SCENE. FEZZANI IS USUALLY AS WELL INFORMED AS ANY FOREIGN DIPLOMAT HERE, BUT HAD LITTLE TO ADD TO WHAT WE KNOW IN THE WAY OF FACTS. SAID HE BELIEVED QADHAFI IS IN BENGHAZI AND HAS BEEN THERE SINCE HIS ARRIVAL FROM EGYPT SIX DAYS AGO. (JULY 14 MFA HAD EXPLAINED TO FEZZANI THAT ACTING FONMIN WAS NOT AVAILABLE TO SEE
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HIM AS HE ACCOMPANYING ALERIAN RCC MEMBER BELGASSEM

TO BENGHAZI. FEZZANI THINKS IT WILL BE SIGNIFICANT WHETHER IT ANNOUNCED THAT BELGASSEM SAW QADHAFI, PRESUMABLY AT BENGHAZI. BELGASSEM'S TRIP, HE BELIEVES, IS PRIMARILY TO LINE UP ATTENDANCE AT SEPT 5 NON-ALIGNED CONFERENCE ALGIERS.) CHARGE POINTED OUT THAT THERE NO LOCAL EVIDENCE OF A YEMEN UNITY MTG IN LIBYA UNDER QADHAFI'S AUSPICES, DESPITE EARLIER INDICATIONS ONE CALLED FOR JULY 15 (SANAA 1286). FEZZANI COULD SHED NO LIGHT ON THAT SITUATION.

2. CHARGE ASKED ABOUT POSSIBLE OUTCOME OF PRESENT PERIOD OF APPARENT WITHDRAWAL ON QADHAFI'S PART. FEZZANI WAS INCLINED TO THINK THAT QADHAFI WILL SOON HAVE TO ANNOUNCE SUBSTANTIAL FAILURE OF HIS EFFORTS TO BRING ABOUT EGYPTIAN/LIBYAN MERGER, BUT WILL ACCOMPANY SUCH A STATEMENT WITH A RINGING REDEDICATION TO THE IDEAL OF UNITY, BLAME EGYPTIAN INTELLECTUALS FOR ITS FAILURE TO DATE, AND CALL UPON OTHER CLASSES TO PICK UP THE BJNNER. HE WOULD NOT ATTACK SADAT PERSONALLY OR DIRECTLY, FEZZANI THOUGHT, PARTLY BECAUSE QADHAFI HAS IN GENERAL LOST FACE RECENTLY DUE TO HIS EXCESSES IN EGYPT. (COMMENT: IT WOULD BE CHARACTERISTIC FOR QADHAFI TO PERSEVERE IN HIS IDEALS IN PUBLIC WHILE NEGLECTING ALL PRACTICAL DIFFICULTIES OR REASONABLE COMPROMISES. AS FOR SADAT, QADHAFI MAY STILL THINK HE CAN PRESSURE HIM IF CONDITIONS ARE RIGHT.)

3. FEZZANI EXPRESSED PRIDE AND SATISFACTION THE WAY TUNISIAN/LIBYAN RELATIONS ARE PROGRESSING. HE SAID THAT LAST SEPTEMBER HE ADVOCATED A LONG-TERM VIEW ON LIBYA: THE ANNOUNCED EGYPTIAN/LIBYAN MERGER SCHEME LIKELY WOULD NOT COME OFF, AND EVEN IF IT DID IT WOULD NOT LAST MORE THAN A FEW YEARS. TUNISIA SHOULD ESSENTIALLY IGNORE IT AND CONCENTRATE ON DEVELOPING CLOSE BILATERAL COOPERATION IN CONCRETE WAYS. UP TO THAT TIME THE LARG'S ATTITUDE TOWARD TUNISIA WAS OBVIOUSLY AMBIVALENT, PARTLY FRIENDLY IN THE NAME OF ARAB UNITY BUT ALSO PARTLY HOSTILE AS DEMONSTRATED BY AID TO TUNISIAN DISSIDENTS. QADHAFI'S VISIT TO TUNIS, INCLUDING BOURGHIBA'S REBUKE TO HIM OF DECEMBER 16, WAS A TURNING POINT. QADHAFI
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CAME AWAY PERSUADED THAT BILATERAL COOPERATION HAD TO BE GIVEN A TRY, AND PUT JALLUD IN CHARGE. JALLUD WAS "EXCELLENT" IN CARRYING FORWARD THIS DECISION. QADHAFI HIMSELF HAD REMARKED TO FEZZANI ABOUT MARCH THAT ACTUALLY MORE COOPERATION EXISTED WITH TUNISIA THAN WITH EGYPT, WHICH WAS "STRANGE". FEZZANI HAD REPLIED IT WAS ONLY "NORMAL". REGARDING THE SUBSEQUENT TUNISIAN/LIBYAN AGREEMENTS AND THE POSSIBLE EFFECT

ON THEM OF EGYPTIAN/LIBYAN UNION, FEZZANI SAID THAT EACH WOULD CONTINUE TO APPLY EXCEPT THE TWO RELATING TO IMMIGRATION CONTROLS AND PRIVATE PROPERTY HOLDINGS IN EACH OTHER'S COUNTRY. REGARDING THE RECENTLY ANNOUNCED AGREEMENT FOR SFAX TO BE USED AS A PORT TO RELIEVE CONGESTION AT TRIPOLI, FEZZANI SAID THAT IF THAT EXPERIMENT WORKS THE LARG WOULD PAY FOR WIDENING THE ROAD FROM SFAX TO THE BORDER.

4. CHARGE COMMENTED THAT ALGERIA SEEMED TO HAVE SOME OF SAME MOTIVES AS TUNISIA IN RELATION TO LIBYA, YET BY COMPARISON HAS NOT SEEN MUCH PROGRESS IN ECONOMIC COOPERATION. HOW DID FEZZANI ACCOUNT FOR THIS? FEZZANI CITED TWO FACTORS. QADHAFI WAS IDEOLOGICALLY A "BEN BELLA MAN" AND SOMEHOW DISTRUSTED BOUMEDIENNE AS A TYPE. THE DISTRUST WAS RECIPROCATED BECAUSE QADHAFI HAD ONCE TOYED WITH SUPPORT OF ALGERIAN OPPOSITIONISTS AND ONLY REJECTED ASYLUM TO SOME AFTER BOUMEDIENNE'S VIEWS WERE ELICITED AND EMERGED AS DECIDEDLY NEGATIVE. SECONDLY, THE RCC HAS NEVER ADOPTED A CLEAR STANCE ON ALGERIAN/LIBYAN COOPERATION AND LET THE MATTER BE HANDLED BY FORMER FONMIN KIKHYA, FOR EXAMPLE, NOT BEING AN RCC MEMBER LIKE HIS ALGERIAN COUNTERPART, KIKHYA WAS UNABLE TO PUSH THROUGH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MOST OF THE AGREEMENTS IN PRINCIPLE THAT ALREADY EXISTED BETWEEN THE TWO GOVTS. (THE LARG HAS HOWEVER RECENTLY ANNOUNCED A LD 15 MILLION STATE BOND ISSUE IN LIBYA ON ALGERIA'S BEHALFN AND THERE IS SOME MILITARY COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES).
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